



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

December 20, 2007

The Honorable Mark E. Emblidge
President
Virginia Board of Education
413 Stuart Circle, Suite 130
Richmond, VA 23220

Dear Dr. Emblidge:

I am writing to commend the Board of Education on its intent to tackle the very important issues of graduation rate and postsecondary and career preparation in its review of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*. As you know, these issues are of great interest to me. I look forward to reviewing the proposed regulation when it reaches my office.

I would like to make a request of the Board of Education as it considers changes to the Standards of Accreditation. I would like for each middle and high school student to have a personal learning plan that aligns academic and career goals with the student's course of study. This plan should be developed and signed by the student, parent, and school officials. I believe such a plan can help students who may be at risk of not graduating by reinforcing the expectations well ahead of their senior year. The planning process might also encourage students who are satisfied with minimum effort to reach for higher levels of achievement knowing the economic benefits of postsecondary career pathways. Additionally, it will give students opportunities to identify areas of interest and explore new things about which they may not otherwise be aware.

As statewide officials, we spend a lot of time thinking about policies on a large scale. These personal plans will affect students on an individual basis, and ensure that we continue to give our students the best possible chance for success, no matter what they choose to do after high school.

The Board of Education and the Department of Education should define the required components of these plans in guidelines.

I suggest the following requirement be included in the proposed regulation. The underlined text is new language.

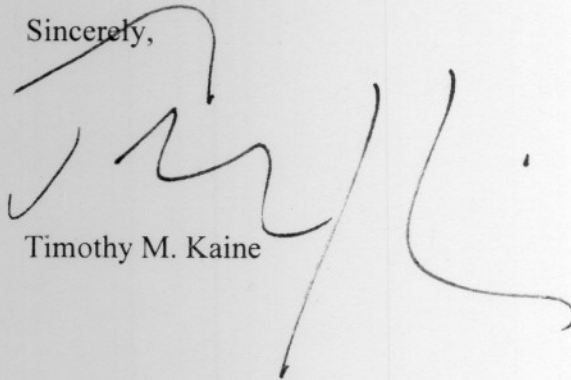
8 VAC 20-131-140. College and career preparation programs and opportunities for postsecondary credit

Beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year, all middle schools must develop and maintain a personal Academic and Career Plan for each seventh- and eighth-grade student that includes specific components established by the Board.

Beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year, students who transfer into a Virginia school after their eighth grade year must have an Academic and Career Plan developed upon enrollment. The components of the Plan shall include, but not be limited to, the student's educational goals and program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests. The Academic and Career plan must be developed and signed by the student, student's parent or guardian, and school official(s) designated by the principal. The Plan will be included in the student's record and must be reviewed and updated, if necessary, before the student enters the ninth and eleventh grades. The school will have met its obligation for parental involvement if it makes a good faith effort to notify the parent or guardian of the responsibility for the development and approval of the Plan.

I may have additional requests for the Board of Education to consider in revising the Standards of Accreditation at the completion of the regulatory and administrative process. Thank you for considering my initial comments on this regulation. I also very much appreciate your strong leadership of the Board of Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy M. Kaine', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Timothy M. Kaine

TMK:jpm

c: The Honorable Thomas R. Morris
Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.